

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0993

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PROP, PINT, IZ
SUBJECT: BAATH PARTY CRITICISM OF IRAQ COMMUNISTS

1. SUMMARY: BAATH PARTY WEEKLY ATTACKS COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRAQ (CPI) FOR TAKING POSITIONS SUBORDINATE TO SOVIET UNION AND FOR IMPLICIT CRITICISM OF IRAQI REGIME. BAATH PAPER, BELIEVED TO REPRESENT VIEWS OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, SCORES ANNUAL POLICY REPORT OF CPI FOR ITS CRITICISM OF EUROCOMMUNISM, CHINA, ERITREAN AND WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. PAPER EQUALLY CRITICAL OF CPI SOFTNESS TOWARD KURDISH DISSIDENTS, SYRIANS AND A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. BAATH PARTY WEEKLY AL-RASID DEVOTED ITS ISSUE DATED APRIL 29 TO A STINGING CRITIQUE OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPI (NOT PUBLISHED BY LOCAL COMMUNIST PRESS, APPARENTLY A RESULT OF OFFICIAL CENSORSHIP). DISTRIBUTION OF AL-RASID WAS DELAYED FOR A WEEK, BUT WHEN IT APPEARED BOOKSHOPS WERE SUPPLIED WITH EXTRA COPIES. CRITIQUE REFLECTS STYLE OF RCC MEMBER TARIQ AZIZ, AN INTIMATE OF SADDAM HUSSEIN, BUT IS SIGNED ANONYMOUSLY BY A "PROGRESSIVE WRITER."

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3. AL-RASID HEADLINE ITS ISSUE, IN REALITY A FOUR-PAGE ARTICLE, WITH RED BANNER, "NON-OBJECTIVE PATH AT THE EXPENSE OF TRUTH." ARTICLE CONTINUED IN SIMILAR HEAVY STYLISTIC VEIN LIGHTENED BY FREQUENT BURSTS OF SARCASM. IT APPEARS THAT COMMUNIST CRITICISM OF IRAQI REGIME WAS VEILED AND OBLIQUE, BUT AL-RASID RELENTLESSLY FERRETS OUT INDICATIONS OF COMMUNIST OPPOSITION TO OFFICIAL POLICY.

4. AL-RASID IS ESPECIALLY INCENSED BY PORTIONS OF REPORT DEALING WITH THE TREATMENT OF NATIONALITIES. SENSING CRITICISM OF THE REGIME'S TREATMENT OF DISSIDENT KURDS, THE AUTHOR OF THE ARTICLE REACTS DEFENSIVELY BY CITING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF AUTONOMOUS RULE. GOING ON THE ATTACK, PROGRESSIVE WRITER THEN ASKS WHETHER THE CPI IS AWARE OF HOW THE SOVIET UNION "SOLVED" ITS OWN NATIONALITY PROBLEM IN A WAY THAT MADE SECESSION IMPOSSIBLE. LATER ON, THE AUTHOR ATTACKS CPI FOR NOT RECOGNIZING THAT ERITREANS AND WESTERN SOMALIS ARE ARABS FIGHTING FOR LIBERATION. INSTEAD OF TAKING SUCH AN OBJECTIVE VIEW, THE CPI FOLLOWS SOVIET LINE AND CONSIDERS THAT ERITREAN AND WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION MOVEMENTS ARE IMPERIALIST SPONSORED UPRISINGS AGAINST ETHIOPIA.

5. ON INTERNAL DEMOCRACY, AL-RASID RESPONDS TO CPI COMPLAINTS THAT COMMUNISTS ARE HARASSED AND DEPRIVED OF FREE EXPRESSION. IF THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT WERE NOT PRACTICING DEMOCRACY, THE AUTHOR STATES, THE CPI COULD NOT FUNCTION AT ALL. CONTINUING TO ARGUE AROUND THE POINT, HE NOTES THAT IF CPI WERE REALLY SINCERE IN WANTING DEMOCRACY IT SHOULD STATE ITS VIEWS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE POPULAR FRONT RATHER THAN MAKING OPEN DECLARATIONS.

6. REGARDING THE MIDDLE EAST, AL-RASID STRIKES HARD AT CPI SUPPORT FOR A "SO-CALLED JUST SETTLEMENT." NOTING THAT CPI ONLY ATTACKED THE SADAT INITIATIVE WHEN IT WAS THE MOSCOW LINE
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TO DO SO, THE AUTHOR IS PARTICULARLY OUTRAGED BY FACT THAT CPI CONSIDERED THE REGIME IN SYRIA AS "PROGRESSIVE." AL-RASID FINDS SUSPECT ANY DEVIATION FROM IRAQI POSITION THAT SADAT AND ASAD ARE MERELY PLAYING DIFFERENT ROLES IN THE SAME CONSPIRACY. SYRIAN RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION ARE DENIGRATED AS "TACTICAL."

7. AL-RASID ALSO DRAWS ATTENTION TO CPI ATTACKS ON FORCES AND STATES WHICH HAVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH IRAQ. CHINA, CAMBODIA AND EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES ARE NAMED. IN SIMILAR VEIN, ARTICLE DEFENDS IRAQI RELIANCE ON WESTERN TECHNOLOGY AND THE ACTIVITY OF CAPITALIST ENTERPRISES IN IRAQI DEVELOPMENT. AL-RASID MAKES CLEAR THAT IN ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH EXTERNAL GROUPS IRAQ MUST CONSIDER MANY FACTORS OTHER THAN IDEOLOGY.

8. AN OVERALL THEME OF THE ARTICLE IS THAT CPI HAS SHOWN ITSELF INCAPABLE OF TAKING OBJECTIVE NATIONAL STANDS BASED ON LOYALTY TO THE IRAQI REVOLUTION. THE BAATH PARTY, BY CONTRAST, MAKES LOYALTY TO THE REVOLUTION RATHER THAN PARTY LOYALTY THE SOLE CRITERION FOR RECEIVING POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY. AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE CPI'S SUBORDINATION TO AN EXTERNALLY IMPOSED LINE, PROGRESSIVE WRITER CITES THE CHANGING ATTITUDE OF THE CPI TOWARD SADAT, IN DIRECT CORRESPONDENCE TO TASS AND PRAVDA EDITORIALS.

9. COMMENT: THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME IN WHICH IRAQI LEADERSHIP HAS USED AL-RASID AS A VEHICLE FOR ATTACKS ON CPI. THE REGIME GIVES CPI A VERY NARROW SCOPE FOR POLITICAL AND INFORMATION ACTIVITIES AND IS ALWAYS ALERT TO CASES IN WHICH IT MAY BE IN OPPOSITION RATHER THAN IN SUPPORT OF OFFICIAL POLICY. REFERENCE TO POPULAR FRONT AS PROPER FORUM FOR CPI TO AIR ITS VIEWS IS LUDICROUS. POPULAR AND PROGRESSIVE NATIONAL FRONT, WHICH ALSO PROVIDES UMBRELLA FOR KURDISH POLITICAL ACTIVITY, IS ALMOST COMPLETELY MORIBUND AND, IN ANY EVENT, TOTALLY CONTROLLED BY THE BAATH PARTY. AS WITH THE RECENT LABOR ELECTIONS, IRAQI POLITICAL LEADERSHIP SIMPLY DOES NOT TOLERATE COMPETITION OR EVEN OPEN EXPRESSION OF DIVERGENT VIEWS.

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10. STRAINS BETWEEN REGIME AND CPI TEND TO EMERGE AT TIMES OF DETERIORATION IN IRAQI-SOVIET RELATIONS. THIS MAY BE SUCH A PERIOD. DISPUTES OVER POLICY TOWARD PALESTINE AND THE HORN OF AFRICA ARE PERHAPS SERIOUS ENOUGH TO AROUSE IRAQI SUSPICION ABOUT LONG RANGE SOVIET MOTIVES IN MAINTAINING THE "STRATEGIC ALLIANCE." THERE HAS BEEN A NOTICEABLY LOW EBB IN BAATH PARTY CONTACTS WITH THEIR SOVIET COUNTERPARTS, AND THE LAST SENIOR SOVIET PARTY OFFICIAL TO VISIT BAGHDAD RECEIVED A CHILLY RECEPTION. NONETHELESS, RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION ARE A KEY ELEMENT IN IRAQI SECURITY. EXTERNALLY, AT LEAST, GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT RELATIONS REMAIN VERY CLOSE. PECK

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